

**The White House**

**Office of the Press Secretary**

For Immediate Release  
October 24, 2009

Statement on the Detention of Haitham Maleh

We join the United Kingdom, France, and other concerned international parties in expressing our deep concern regarding the detention of human rights lawyer Haitham Maleh by Syrian security services since Wednesday, October 14. The arrest of 78-year-old Maleh comes as the latest Syrian action in a two-year crackdown on lawyers and civil society activists. We call on the Syrian government to meet its responsibilities under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and to end its practice of arbitrary arrests. Syria should demonstrate its commitment to international legal norms by releasing Maleh and other Syrian citizens who have been imprisoned solely for seeking to exercise their internationally recognized political freedoms.